

## **NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC. 78th ANNUAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 20, 2025**

The 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the New York Ornithological Association (NYSOA) was held on 20 September 2025 at the Ithaca Downtown Conference Center, Tompkins County, NY.

**Roll Call** – Pat Aitken performed a roll call of member club delegates; a quorum was reached with 27 present representing 18 clubs.

**Approval of 2024 Minutes** – A motion was made to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes; this was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **President’s Remarks** – Anne Swaim

Anne Swaim shared that moving forward, NYSOA hopes to combine the Secretary and Treasurer roles. This will be possible as the accountant is reducing the workload for the Treasurer, and the Board has identified ways to reduce the workload for the Secretary as well. Anne reported that a Request for Proposals to update and maintain the NYSOA website had solicited 12 proposals; it is hoped a contractor will be selected in early 2026. She thanked the many Board and Committee members for the invaluable gift of their time.

### **Treasurer’s Report and Audit Report** – Anne Swaim

The 2024 Treasurer’s Report was presented, showing that as of December 31, 2024, NYSOA’s total annual income was \$76,903.64, with annual expenses of \$76,138.48, and an ending balance of \$240,789.39. This elevated balance was thanks to kind bequests from the Herbert Lightner and Arie Gilbert estates. These funds will soon be moved out of the General Operating fund into the Memorial Fund and some will go towards special projects NYSOA has planned, such as the website update and a research fund. Anne mentioned that there may be a small issue in the report regarding the exact amount allotted to individual membership dues—the accountant will look into this. The expenses for *The Kingbird* were higher than expected due to the exemplary efforts of the team to produce more issues than expected to catch up with the backlog. Anne also pointed out the generous support the NYS Young Birders Club has received which allows the club to provide support to numerous young birders. She thanked the Auditing Committee for their efforts—Steve Chang, Tom Burke, and Peter Capainolo.

### **DEC Report** – Amanda Dahms

(Separate handout) Angelina Ross (Angelina.Ross@dec.ny.gov) authored this comprehensive report which covers, among other topics, the Endangered and Threatened Species Mitigation Bank Fund; plans for monitoring of and development of guidance for grassland breeding and wintering birds in New York; Spruce Grouse habitat management, monitoring, genetics, translocations, and population monitoring; Peregrine Falcon monitoring; and non-lead ammunition for eagle conservation.

## Committee Reports

### **Membership – Pat Aitken**

Pat reported that individual and club membership has held fairly steady over the years despite some turnover in participating clubs.

### **Awards – Pat Aitken**

Lillian C. Stoner Awards were presented to three young birders at the Annual Meeting banquet. Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to two rare bird homeowner hosts. The Emanuel Levine Memorial Award was also presented at the Annual Meeting Banquet.

### **Conservation – Andy Mason**

NYSOA weighed in this year on a number of statewide issues by submitting comments and contacting the governor. The most recent letter was to Governor Hochul, asking for her signature on Horseshoe Crab protection legislation, and Andy Mason asked member clubs and individuals to consider writing a letter on that issue as well. Four articles covering conservation issues were submitted to *New York Birders*. Andy Mason noted that NYSOA is always open to contact from clubs or individual members on local issues that NYSOA may be able to assist with, via a letter or comments during a public participation period.

### **New York State Young Birders Club – Roseanne Vinson**

Rosanne Vinson thanked the many new parents that stepped up to help run field trips, membership, the scholarship program, and the website. The club now has 46 members. The average member is 15 years old and members age out of the Club at 20. Three of the members received Lillian C. Stoner Awards to attend this annual meeting. A NYSYBC team participated in the World Series of Birding and won second place in the high school division. Rosanne Vinson also thanked the many individuals and clubs who ran field trips for the club, including their kickoff meeting hosted by Saw Mill River Audubon that had great presentations from researchers and club members. The Young Birders chose the Wild Bird Fund as the recipient of 50% of this year's fundraising total.

### **New York State Avian Records Committee – Shai Mitra for Michael McBrien**

NYSARC has managed to claw back from a backlog of several years of unreviewed records to the point where all formal submissions have been reviewed through 2024 at this point. The Annual Report for 2023 is complete and will be published in *The Kingbird* as soon as possible. The committee consists of Mike McBrien (Chair), Gary Chapin (Secretary), Shawn Billerman, Tom Burke, Mike Cooper, Tim Healy, Patricia Lindsay, and Jay McGowan. They instituted criteria for how to deal with birds that are reported only from eBird and not formally submitted to the committee, including those from retroactive years. Because certain species that used to be very rare are much less rare now, through careful deliberation, NYSARC instituted a variety of criteria for determining when species no longer need formal review by the committee—this was published in last year's volumes of *The Kingbird* and shows the removal of multiple species.

Interestingly, in 2024, they did not find any additional species that needed to be removed. There have also been several new additions to the New York State list, which is now at 517 species—the latest are Taiga Bean-Goose and Red-footed Booby.

***Publications:***

*The Kingbird* – Shai Mitra

Shai reported that much of the content of *The Kingbird* this year has been devoted to NYSARC as both *The Kingbird* and NYSARC have been catching up on delays in their respective processes. Tim Healy's article in Volume 74 No. 3 is worth looking up and reading just for the 'wow' factor of how many amazing species records (2021 through 2024) have occurred over the last several years. To catch up from the several years of only three *Kingbird* issues going out, in 2023, six were published; in 2024, we published five issues; and this year so far we've published three, with a fourth to come out very shortly and a fifth to either come out at the end of December or in January. Following that issue, *The Kingbird* will essentially be caught up. This year's winner of 'Best contribution to *The Kingbird* for the 2024 volume' was Kim Hartquist for her article 'Two Brown-capped Black-capped Chickadees in Rochester During Summer of 2023.'

*New York Birders* – Dan Miller

Dan Miller, *New York Birders* editor, thanked the many editors and contributors to the newsletter over the years including Carena Pooth, Andy Mason, Julie Hart, Pat Aitken, and Anne Swaim. The next deadline for *New York Birders* will be for the winter issue, on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Checklist of the Birds of New York State* – Carena Pooth

Carena Pooth shared that she has been working on the Checklist for 22 years now and it is one of her favorite things to do as she has learned so much from it. Carena noted that the list recently underwent several changes, including splits in the genus *Accipiter*, Herring Gull into four species, and Warbling Vireo into two species, all resulting in changes to the names of affected species, (new genus names for some, new species names for others, and Eastern and Western Warbling-Vireo acquiring a hyphen!). Other changes include some sequences getting shuffled, and the addition of two new species: Taiga Bean-Goose and Red-footed Booby.

***County and State Listing* – Carena Pooth**

The year that had the highest ever number of submissions was 2020, the first COVID year and the year the Atlas started. This year's (2025) records are due March 1, 2026 and the forms are going to be online in November.

***Website and Information Services* – Carena Pooth**

The report highlights the most commonly accessed pages which include NYSARC activities, and reports, and *The Kingbird* archive, which has a keyword search feature allowing searches going way back to the beginning of the organization when the publication was first published. Each year Carena adds another year to the search. Some features that are not commonly used will

probably be removed when NYSOA successfully transfers responsibility for website updates to an external person or organization.

### **Research – Anne Swaim for Alison Kocek**

Ornithological research is one of the core focuses of NYSOA. NYSOA's recent bequest from the Herb Lightner estate was significant and the organization wants to use it in a responsible, sustainable way and felt this was a perfect fit to reach that goal. We are expecting to have research grant details available to interested applicants later this winter with a likely proposal due date in early 2026. Students, professionals, amateurs, or organizations seeking a small grant to support upcoming research on New York's birds should keep an eye out for that to gain financial support.

### **Bird of the Year Update – Anne Swaim for Alison Kocek**

This year NYSOA started a New York Bird of the Year initiative. The American Kestrel was picked as our inaugural NYBOTY, voted in by New York birders. NYSOA is still soliciting photographs, artwork, and poems on kestrels which will go towards the content for upcoming *New York Birders* newsletters. Voting for the 2026 New York Bird of the Year using suggestions from the 2025 voting poll will begin later this year. We hope to begin building a little conservation buzz around our NYBOTY and hope members can help by publicizing it more widely beyond our organization to stimulate greater interest in the initiative.

### **Breeding Bird Atlas III Update – Julie Hart**

Julie Hart reported that currently there is a lot of data review and proofing happening, and that she will reach out to experts across the state for input. A post-doc just started at the Cornell Lab who will be doing occupancy and abundance analyses. A spatial ecologist that is on staff with New York Natural Heritage will be spearheading the habitat and the change analysis to look at species presence change and where the state has lost or gained species. There will be both a book and a website produced with the results of the Atlas and the BBA is in the final stages of getting the book contract nailed down. Julie spent quite a bit of time over the winter and the early part of this year working with the State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator at DEC to review all of the lists of species that are of greatest conservation need in New York and update them using BBA data. Julie hopes to attend the 2027 NYSOA meeting to give an update and possibly have a photo contest.

## **Election of Officers and Directors**

The 2025 NYSOA Nominating Committee, consisting of Anne Swaim (Chair), Patricia Aitken, and Charlie Scheim, presented the slate below to serve as NYSOA Officers with terms expiring in 2026, and four Directors with terms expiring in 2027.

**Officers:** (Terms expire in 2026)  
President: Patricia Aitken  
Vice President: Alison Kocek  
Secretary/Treasurer: Anne Swaim

**Directors:** (Terms expire in 2027)  
Craig Braack  
Russ Comeau  
Anne Swaim  
Joseph Wallace

A motion to approve the slate of Officers and Directors was made by Shai Mitra and seconded by Craig Braack and approved unanimously.

### **Election of Nominating and Auditing Committees**

The following committee slates for 2026 were recommended by the NYSOA Board of Directors for the delegates' approval.

**Auditing Committee:**  
Steven Chang (Chair)  
Thomas W. Burke  
Peter Capainolo

**Nominating Committee:**  
Anne Swaim (Chair)  
Patricia Aitken  
John Loz

A motion to approve the appointment of the Auditing and the Nominating Committees was made by Shai Mitra and seconded by Carena Pooth and approved unanimously.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business:**

NYSOA's 2026 Annual Meeting will be a virtual meeting. The 2027 Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, and the 2028 meeting by the Rochester Birding Association.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Carena Pooth; it was seconded and approved unanimously.

Supplementary documents to the committee and financial reports and other matters discussed at this meeting can be accessed here:

<https://nybirds.org/docs2025>

